

# CITY of WALKER

4243 Remembrance Road, N.W.  
Walker, Michigan 49544  
(616) 453-6311

James M. Hatch, City Manager

June 17, 1998

Ms. Magalie Roman Salas  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 222  
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Ex Parte Letter Re: Cases FL 91-171, FO 91-301

Dear Secretary Salas:

Enclosed are two (2) copies of an ex parte presentation in the above-referenced proceeding.

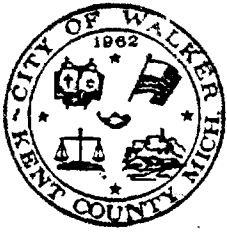
Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James M. Hatch".

James M. Hatch  
City Manager

JMH:pad

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# CITY of WALKER

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James M. Hatch, City Manager

June 17, 1998

Chairman William Kennard  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street NW Room 814  
Washington DC 20554

Dear Chairman Kennard:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Walker to express our concern with the proposed change in the FCC Emergency Alter System (EAS) rules. This change would prevent people watching local TV stations on a cable system from receiving emergency announcements from their local public safety authorities.

On May 31, 1998, the City of Walker experienced Tornado conditions and straight line winds in excess of 120 MPH, per the National Weather Service. As a result of these hurricane force winds, the City of Walker sustained over 50 Million Dollars in damage to both its residential and commercial districts leaving many homeless and without the basic amenities of power, water, or sewer services. This was a life threatening situation that required an emergency declaration from our Mayor Don Knottnerus, and ultimately Governor John Engler.

Currently, our community has a provision in its cable franchise that allows us as a municipality to interrupt all programming with an

Chairman William Kennard  
Page 2  
June 17, 1998

emergency alert. The proposed change being championed by the National Association of Broadcasters would prevent local cable companies from ever interrupting local TV stations that are carried on a cable system with an emergency alert. Franchise provisions requiring local emergency systems would thus be preempted. The NAB claims that their emergency alerts are superior to those of state and local public safety authorities.

We choose to disagree. Emergency information on TV stations can be helpful but typically apply to only weather. Local emergency alerts are used for a variety of emergencies such as leaks, spills, traffic and snow alerts.

There is no basis for such a preemption of state and local public safety authorities, particularly against their will. All viewers of cable tv should get emergency announcements from their local public safety officials, not a private party who has no expertise, training or authority on public safety matters.

Considering the May 31<sup>st</sup> event here in Walker, it is a violation of common sense to turn this vital function to outside interests. So please reject the proposed change to our existing franchise provision for local emergency alerts.

Sincerely,



James M. Hatch  
City Manager

JMH:pad

cc: Commissioner Harold Furchtgott-Roth  
Commissioner Michael Powell  
Commission Gloria Tristani  
Commissioner Susan Ness  
Mr. John Logan  
Ms. Magalie Salas